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The Birds will be looking for revenge against their division foe Sunday. 26

"House of Horrors" mastermind sentenced. 10

Toni Collette turns pain into a punchline. 17

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1 The Department of Homeland Security has authorized U.S. Secret Service protection for Republican presidential candidates Donald Trump and Ben Carson, ABC news tweeted Thursday. Earlier this month, the two candidates formally requested 24-hour protection, which could involve nearly 300 agents from the Secret Service. REUTERS

AIDING AL QAEDA

2 Four men have been indicted in Ohio for conspiring to aid al Qaeda's Yemen-based affiliate and its U.S.-born member Anwar al Awlaki, the U.S. Justice Department said Thursday. Suspects Yahya Farooq Mohammad, 37; his brother, Ibrahim Zubair Mohammad, 36; Asif Ahmed Salim, 35; and his brother, Sultane Room Salim, 40, were charged in U.S. District Court in Cleveland with conspiring to funnel money to Awlaki in support of attacks on U.S. forces, the department said in a statement. REUTERS

THANKSGIVING TRAVEL

3 Thanksgiving travel on U.S. airlines will be even busier this year than last, an airlines association predicts. U.S. carriers are expected to fly 25.3 million passengers worldwide from Friday, Nov. 20, through Tuesday, Dec. 1, up 3 percent from a year earlier, Washington-based trade group Airlines for America said Thursday. REUTERS

A HUG FOR WILLOW

7 Ezra, 7, hugs Willow, a therapy dog, at a preview of the National Dog Show at the Ronald McDonald House on Thursday. Willow and several other dogs visited the RMH as part of a delegation from the upcoming National Dog Show.

MAIN PHOTO BY CHARLES MOSTOLLER, ALL OTHER PHOTOS BY GETTY IMAGES

GITMO PRISONERS

4 Prisoners being held at the military prison in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, should remain at the facility, House Speaker Paul Ryan said. "Guantanamo detainees should be in Guantanamo," Ryan told reporters at a news briefing. His comments come amid an expected U.S. plan to close the prison officials said is likely to be unveiled in the coming days. REUTERS

SYRIA CHEMICAL WEAPONS

5 Chemical weapons experts have determined that mustard gas was used during fighting in Syria in August, according to a report by an international watchdog seen by Reuters. The chemical — which causes severe delayed burns to the eyes, skin and lungs and is banned under international law — was used during a battle between Islamic State insurgents and another rebel group, diplomatic sources said. The report provides the first official confirmation of use of sulfur mustard. REUTERS

UAW APPROVE PACT

6 United Auto Workers members at the General Motors truck plant in Fort Wayne, Indiana, approved a new four-year contract by a wide margin, joining momentum in favor of the deal as voting continues Thursday. The president of the UAW local in Fort Wayne said the vote was 1,839 to 1,311 in favor at the plant. REUTERS

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BRIEF

Officer acquitted in shooting of suspect lying in snow

A Pennsylvania jury on Thursday acquitted a police officer of all charges in the fatal shooting of a suspect as he lay in the snow.

After deliberating for close to 11 hours, the jury acquitted Officer Lisa Mearkle, a veteran of the Hummelstown Police Department, of third-degree murder in the death of David Kassick, 59, of Hummelstown.

A centerpiece of the case against Mearkle, 37, was a videotape recorded by the Taser she used to bring down Kassick in February.

The jerky video played for the jury in Dauphin County Court of Common Pleas in Harrisburg showed Kassick facedown as Mearkle is heard repeatedly shouting, "Show your hands!" Two gunshots ring out and then a red spot appears on his back.

Mearkle said she hoped to return to the police force that suspended her after the shooting.

"I've been to hell and back," said Mearkle, breaking into tears.

Kassick's nephew, Kevin Fetter, told reporters that he still considers Mearkle a murderer.

"She feared for her life from a man who was laying on the ground. I think she murdered him in cold blood," Fetter said.

Mearkle had attempted to pull over Kassick for an expired vehicle inspection sticker and he fled.

Mearkle Tased him and he fell. Perry told jurors that as Kassick lay in the snow, his left hand appeared to be reaching into his coat, presumably for a gun, and that caused the officer to shoot.

Police later found no weapon on Kassick, who served 10 years in federal prison for a heroin sale that resulted in a death. REUTERS

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Chaka Fattah Jr. exits in a cab after being found guilty in federal court; his father U.S. Rep Chaka Fattah speaks to media. SAM NEWHOUSE

Fattah Jr. convicted

The congressman's son was found guilty Thursday.

SAM NEWHOUSE
@scnewhouse
sam.newhouse@metro.us

Chaka Fattah Jr. was convicted by a jury on Thursday on 22 of 23 counts of fraud.

Fattah Jr., the son of a veteran Philadelphia congressman, vowed to appeal.

Charges were related to Fattah Jr.'s personal tax returns, his use of funds acquired through business loans from various banks that the government said were obtained fraudulently and his work as a consultant to a charter school.

Fattah Jr. told reporters after the verdict was announced that the admitted leak by an FBI agent of a federal raid on his apartment in February 2012 to local media led to his inability to afford counsel.

"Because of the media leak, I lost my income," Fattah Jr. said.

He claims the publicity made him unemployable and ended his contract with Delaware Valley High Schools.

But he expressed confidence about his future.

"I'm going to be good on appeal," he said.

His father, U.S. Rep. Chaka Fattah, questioned the trial's fairness — noting that his son was forbidden from discussing the federal investigation into Fattah Sr.

"These same individuals had been involved in a multiyear investigation into me," he said. "Could that have perhaps provided some light on this subject?"

Federal prosecutors made Fattah Jr.'s work as a consultant running 259 Consulting, which was hired by David Shulick, CEO of Delaware Valley Charter Schools, a program serving at-risk urban youth, the centerpiece of their case.

Prosecutors contend that Fattah Jr. illegally obtained a $450,000 fee by aiding Shulick inflating budgets at the school, which had a $4.5 million contract and was paid by the School District of Philadelphia.

The contract required that Shulick spend 10 percent on a certified minority contractor.

Fattah Jr. said in tapes of conversations secretly recorded by his college roommate, Matthew Amato, that his father, who is also indicted on federal fraud charges, was the one who referred Shulick to Fattah Jr.

Federal prosecutors also claimed that Shulick and Fattah Jr. inflated the budget further — by an additional $450,000, $50,000 of which was budgeted for "interns," so that Fattah Jr.'s cut of the contract would not affect Shulick's bottom line.

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2007 Cadillac Escalade Platinum $349/Month

2015 Chrysler 200 Limited $299/Month

2011 Infiniti G37x Coupe $319/Month

2011 Jeep Grand Cherokee 4WD $347/Month

2008 Cadillac CTS $287/Month

2012 Hyundai Sonata Hybrid $279/Month

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Schuylkill trail: Time for cameras?

A woman who said a man grabbed her from behind and covered her mouth speaks out.

DAN KELLEY
@MetroPhilly
dan.kelley@metro.us

Runners on the Schuylkill River Trail on Nov. 05, 2015. CHARLES MOSTOLLER

Video taken by a jogger shows a biker sexually harassing a woman. Visit Metro.us for the video. PROVIDED

A Center City jogger who was the victim of an attack on the Schuylkill River Trail wants surveillance cameras on the secluded pathway, which has become the focus of security concerns in recent weeks.

Runners and cyclists on the trail, which stretches from South Street to Kelly Drive, have complained of bands of teenage boys playing games of chicken, and in some cases groping joggers in what seems like a sick joke.

But one runner is saying that there is the danger of much worse happening.

She is asking that her name not be used because her attacker is still on the loose.

The 28-year-old Center City lawyer said she was jogging on the trail at dusk on Oct. 28, when a man grabbed her from behind, covering her mouth so she could not scream.

She bit him, freeing herself and running away as she screamed for help.

"I kept screaming and not looking back," she said.

She dialed 911 on her phone, and waited with witnesses for police to show up.

She doesn't know what the man wanted, but she doesn't think the motive was robbery.

"I was running, so I didn't have a purse for him to steal," she said.

Her story comes as a group of stakeholders have begun to eye safety concerns on the trail, which became a top spot for exercise enthusiasts when it opened last year.

Ninth District Police Capt. Raymond Convery said his department has received two reports of juveniles, generally on bikes, touching women runners on their butts. But he's aware of several more incidents through social media. He's assigned extra bike officers to the area, and they're warning kids that if they get arrested, they may have to register as sex offenders.

He said most of the harassments happen between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m.

But Convery said he hasn't received any reports similar to the one experienced by the 28-year-old victim.

At a City Council hearing held Thursday about safety concerns along the trail sponsored by Councilman Kenyatta Johnson, Parks and Recreation Commissioner Mike DiBeradinis said he would defer to the police department about whether cameras were necessary.

> *"I kept screaming and not looking back."*
>
> Victim

Convery said the department would always like to have more cameras, but there isn't always money to pay for them.

The victim said she's experienced harassment from the juveniles on bikes — it's not in any way appropriate, she said, but it doesn't make her feel unsafe.

Her attacker? He made her feel unsafe.

"I've never felt threatened on the Schuylkill River Trail" she said, "but this feels really different."

Since the attack, she's called Parks and Recreation, and City Council to get cameras installed along the trail — or call boxes.

She hasn't heard back from anyone.

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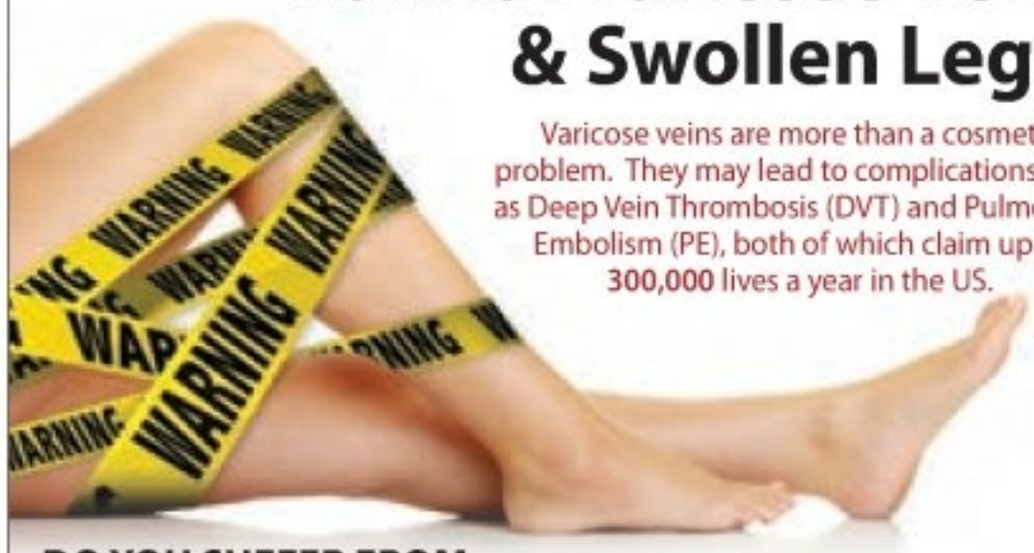

Varicose veins are more than a cosmetic problem. They may lead to complications such as Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) and Pulmonary Embolism (PE), both of which claim up to 300,000 lives a year in the US.

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JOHNNY DOC WON TUESDAY'S ELECTION

ERNEST OWENS

The Ernest Opinion

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Award-winning multimedia journalist Ernest Owens is a keen observer of social, LGBT and race issues in Philadelphia. Follow him @MrErnestOwens

So the election is over and not much has changed. Voter turnout was low (what's new?) and Philly's Democratic Party reined supreme.

If it weren't for the proposition to vote on keeping the Office of LGBT Affairs open, I honestly would have sat this entire race out in protest. Most of the seats were either uncontested or already a done deal — but again, what's new for Philly politics?

But yet again, my friends on social media acted as if this election was "very important this time." Because "democracy."

Growing up, my mother used to ask what I wanted for dinner as if I actually had a choice. I still had to pretend like I had one and participated enthusiastically. That's what voting feels like in Philly.

So who really won the election? Clearly not Andrew Stober or any other third-party candidate.

The winner's name isn't even on the ballot, but his money is all over it. Congratulations, John "Johnny Doc" Dougherty — you just purchased yourself more political capital at the expense of the general public!

Mayor-elect Jim Kenney owes his win to the infamous labor boss, and union support shaped his entire campaign. Very soon, Dougherty's electrician's union Local 98 will have to negotiate contracts with Kenney. How do you imagine that will turn out after all that money it took to guarantee Kenney's win?

Let's just say I'm banking on the unions to own Kenney this upcoming term given that he doesn't have the best record on standing up to such influence.

Speaking of money and influence, guess whose brother got elected to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court? Not a coincidence or a shock (as the press tried to make it seem), but Kevin M. Dougherty, Doc's brother, was the top vote-winning Supreme Court candidate statewide.

IBEW Local 98 business manager John "Johnny Doc" Dougherty CHARLES MOSTOLLER

Sure, Kevin is a respected Common Pleas Court judge … but let's get frank here — his brother's money made all the difference. This was the most expensive state Supreme Court race in American history, and over $300,000 in campaign funding came from electricians unions or Johnny Doc's strong-arm, same thing.

So we have a mayor-elect and Supreme Court justice whose power (among many others) are going to be in debt to one influential union boss.

If you were elected to office and wanted to stay in power, who would you be quick to prioritize: a low voting population who will vote for you anyway? Or the union boss who has the power to build up another opponent to go against you?

And that's why Philadelphians lost this election cycle. We don't have the voting power or money to dissuade our elected officials to do better by us.

Clearly this isn't our entire fault; there are vultures among the ranks that clearly would like to keep it that way. City Commissioner Chairman Anthony Clark, got reelected on Tuesday as well — will he actually show up to work this term?

Either way, our only hope is to watch our new mayor-elect's initial moves critically.

They say, "follow the money," but I think we should all follow the motives.

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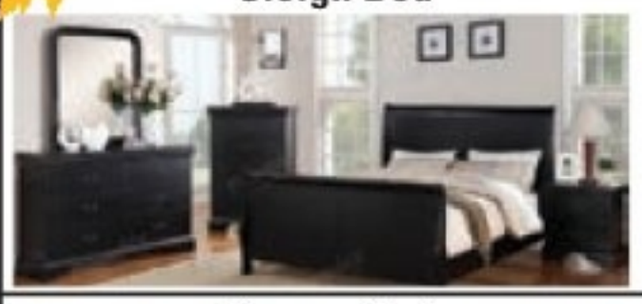

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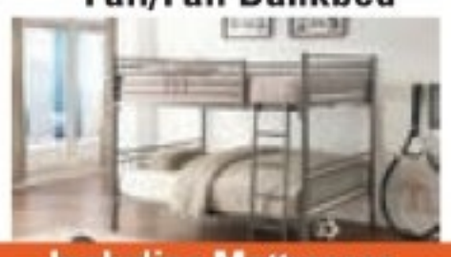

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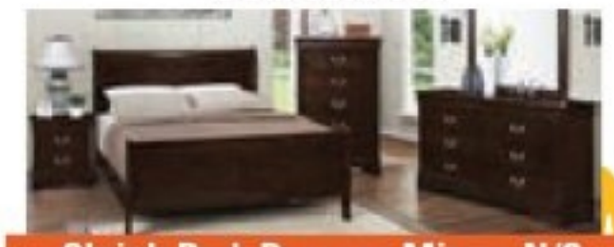

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Tacony dungeon mastermind gets life

Victims speak at sentencing hearing, marking the first time public has heard from disabled adults kept in a squalid basement.

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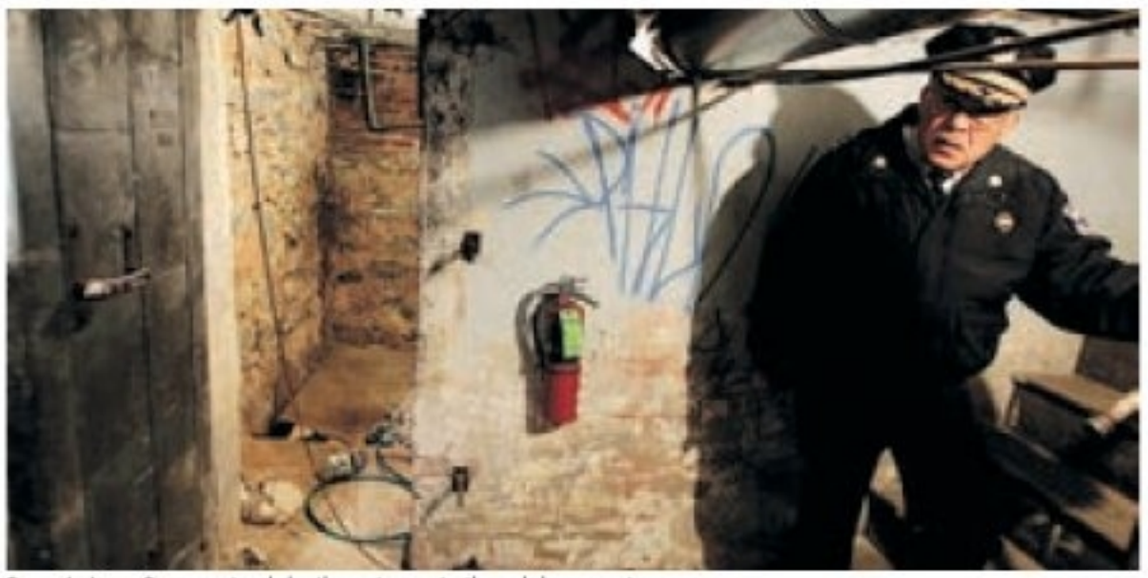

Commissioner Ramsey stands by the entrance to the sub-basement where the four victims were kept. METRO FILE PHOTOS

The mastermind of a scheme in which mentally disabled people were imprisoned, kept in deplorable conditions and tortured for their benefits checks, was sentenced Thursday to life in prison plus 80 years.

Linda Weston, a diminutive woman with a squeaky voice accused of monstrous crimes, pleaded guilty in September in a case that began in 2011 with the horrific discovery of some of her victims in the squalid basement of an apartment building in the city's Tacony section.

Weston

The victims were chained to a boiler in a filthy storage space, used buckets for toilets and old clothes for bedding.

"I do believe in God," Weston said at a hearing, "God knows what happened."

The sentencing hearing marked the first time some of her victims have spoken publicly.

"I don't know if the word is evil. I don't know what it is, but she really did a bad job on me," said Darwin McLemire, a mentally challenged man whose tattered ears bore the signs of the horrors he experienced. "She stuck a dog on me. She put chains on me."

Prosecutors showed photos of the victims at the time they were freed, which brought sobs from the families of victims who had come to the hearing.

They showed emaciated figures with horrific scars and, in some cases, broken bones.

One woman, who was held captive for nearly a decade and who was forced into prostitution, was had BBs removed from under her skin.

Weston, she said, had hurt her "real bad. She knocked my teeth out. She made me have sex with all those guys."

Weston pleaded guilty in a deal that spared her the death penalty, a deal U.S. District Judge Cynthia Rufe said was cleared at the highest ranks at the U.S. Justice Department.

"This is an overwhelming situation if you know just a little bit of the facts," Rufe said. "And we know more than anyone would care to know."

Overarching the hearing was the question of how Weston's scheme was able to last for so long. In at least two cases, people she imprisoned died, but Weston, who has testified that she had just a grade-school education, was able to convince investigators that they died of natural causes.

Prosecutors said Weston stayed one step ahead of authorities by moving changing locations at the first sign of trouble.

The scheme spanned three states and seven locations.

She appeared with her captives at interviews with the Social Security Administration, during which she sometimes answered questions on their behalf before being designated their caretaker.

Rufe hinted that she thinks that while the case is extreme, it may not be unique.

"This case presented to this court and the public a culture that may not be isolated, but certainly needs to be exposed," she said.

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NSA spy program too clumsy to use: Senator Burr

Some officials have raised concern about the effectiveness of the new system. GETTY IMAGES

The NSA is weeks away from ending its former indiscriminate vacuuming of information about Americans' phone calls.

A new more limited system for monitoring Americans' phone calls for signs of terrorist intent is so slow and cumbersome the National Security Agency will likely never use it, a senior Senate Republican said.

Richard Burr, chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, opposed the system when it was mandated earlier this year.

He said this week he was not concerned by how the NSA will transition to it because it will probably not be used.

Burr made his comments as lawmakers and Obama administration officials continue to disagree about the new approach to call monitoring, set to take effect Nov. 29 under a law that overhauled domestic surveillance practices.

It will replace a system exposed publicly more than two years ago by former NSA contractor Edward Snowden and denounced by civil liberties advocates as overly intrusive.

The system cannot be relied upon for national security purposes, Burr said in an interview Tuesday.

Burr said he would have preferred to let the NSA continue its data grabs unfettered, adding that discontinuing the metadata program represents "a loss in the arsenal we have to identify terrorists."

Asked about Burr's comments, White House National Security Council spokesman Ned Price said the USA Freedom Act, enacted in June, "struck a reasonable compromise which allows us to continue to protect the country while implementing various reforms."

"I'm not concerned with the rollout [of the new system] because I'm resigned to the fact that metadata will never be used again."

Burr, a Republican security hawk

A presidential review panel appointed by President Barack Obama found that while the now-abandoned metadata collection program may have assisted in terrorism-related investigations, it did not lead to a single clear counter-terrorism breakthrough that could be directly attributed to the program.

The NSA declined to comment on Burr's remarks.

Under the new procedures, the government — NSA and law enforcement agencies — must obtain court authorization before being able to collect phone calling data of particular individuals or groups of individuals available through routine billing records maintained by telecom companies.

The companies themselves will not be required to maintain such data in any particular format or for any specific period of time.

Under the previous law, the NSA itself collected and stored large volumes of telephone calling data from U.S. telecom companies and NSA spies were allowed to query it extensively, including charting an individual suspect's network of phone contacts, without a court warrant.

REUTERS

Boy discovered 13 years after reported missing

Julian Hernandez NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING AND EXPLOITED CHILDREN

A 5-year-old boy reported missing in Alabama 13 years ago was found unharmed in Ohio this week after the now-18-year-old began applying for college and officials discovered his name in a national database of missing children, police said.

U.S. federal investigators located Julian Hernandez after he used an incorrect Social Security number for his college applications, said Lt. Kevin York of the Vestavia Hills, Alabama, police department.

"He was applying to several different colleges, and the Social Security number didn't add up," York said Thursday. "His counselor found that out and the school notified authorities, and it went from there."

The teen's father, Bobby Hernandez, was arrested Monday in Cleveland, said FBI spokeswoman Vicki Anderson.

Prosecutors in Ohio charged him with tampering with records by allegedly using false information to obtain an Ohio state identity card, according to court documents.

Bobby Hernandez did not have custody of his son when the boy's mother reported him missing in 2002, York said.

The father and son were living under false names in Ohio, the officer added.

The elder Hernandez, who remains jailed in Cleveland on $250,000 bail, could face additional charges in Alabama, York said. REUTERS

'Million Masks March' in London

An anti-capitalist protester wearing a Guy Fawkes mask holds a placard as he stands alongside a burning police car during the "Million Masks March," organized by the group activist group Anonymous in London on Thursday. The protest was held on Guy Fawkes Night, observed in Britain every Nov. 5 to commemorate the capture of the man who plotted to blow up Parliament. Many of the marchers wore the white masks, which are now associated with Anonymous. GETTY IMAGES

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DO THE 'WALK BACK'!

TOM FOREMAN

Opinion

CNN's Tom Foreman is the author of the new book "My Year of Running Dangerously"

Like the Cha-Cha Slide, the Harlem Shake, the Dougie or any other dance craze, right now a new step is all the rage in the presidential polka. It's called the "Walk Back." So if you want to stay cool with the political hepcats, listen up, it goes like this: Put your hands on your hips, throw out your chest, say something provocative/strong/or just plain wrong, and then quickly back away as if you didn't really mean it at all.

The "D.C. Dancers" (or if you prefer, the "Rotunda Rockettes") love this move because it allows them to grab huge headlines by attacking opponents, quoting questionable research, and raising utterly unsubstantiated charges; then, faster than the fact checkers can pin them down, they can issue "clarifications" and "follow ups" that take them completely off of the hook.

Many of the candidates have added the move to their regular routines. "Look at that face!" Donald Trump famously said as he attacked Carly Fiorina. "Would anyone vote for that?" Then as women howled, he walked it back: "I'm talking about persona. I'm not talking about looks."

President Obama was asked on "60 Minutes" about Hillary Clinton's private email server and said, "I don't think it posed a national security problem." But when reporters pointed out that the FBI was still investigating, his staff cut in and changed the tune, saying the president was merely "making an observation about what we know so far."

This week even the Supreme Leader of Iran walked back that old favorite chant of the angry mobs, "Death to America!" Turns out, he says, they really just want death to American policy and maybe an occasional paper cut.

For all its popularity, I'm not a fan of the Walk Back. Too often it seems like a cover up for stupidity, deceit, and cheap shots. No, I prefer an even older move called "Walk It Like You Talk It." But honestly, you don't see that around here much these days.

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United States pushes for spectrum for 5G, civil drones, flight tracking

The United States wants a global deal to reallocate parts of the radio spectrum for the next "5G" generation of mobile devices, a boom in civilian drones and a worldwide flight tracking system, senior U.S. officials said on Thursday.

Tom Wheeler, chairman of the U.S. Federal Communications Commission, told a news conference that world powers would have to decide whether to follow the U.S. example in allocating more of their spectrum to mobile telephony.

"The big question here is will the other countries of the world be participating in meeting that spectrum need in a way that produces scope and scale economies that allows the wonder of wireless and truly the transformative power that this represents to individual human beings, let alone to economies," he asked.

GETTY IMAGES

The United States will start auctioning part of its VHF spectrum on March 29 next year, and wants others to join in to reduce costs for global business.

Wheeler was speaking during the first week of the month-long World Radiocommunication Conference in Geneva, held every four years by the United Nations' International Telecommunication Union.

Ambassador Decker Anstrom, head of the U.S. delegation to the conference, said there were a "variety of views" among delegates on the issue, and on another debate about spectrum for civilian drones, which are expected to become an $80 billion business in the United States alone over the next decade.

Civilian drones could monitor incidents at nuclear power stations, check the safety of pipelines, watch over wildlife preserves and help in weather forecasting, he said.

Anstrom said he was very optimistic that a global agreement was possible as early as next week on a third issue — providing spectrum for global flight tracking.

REUTERS

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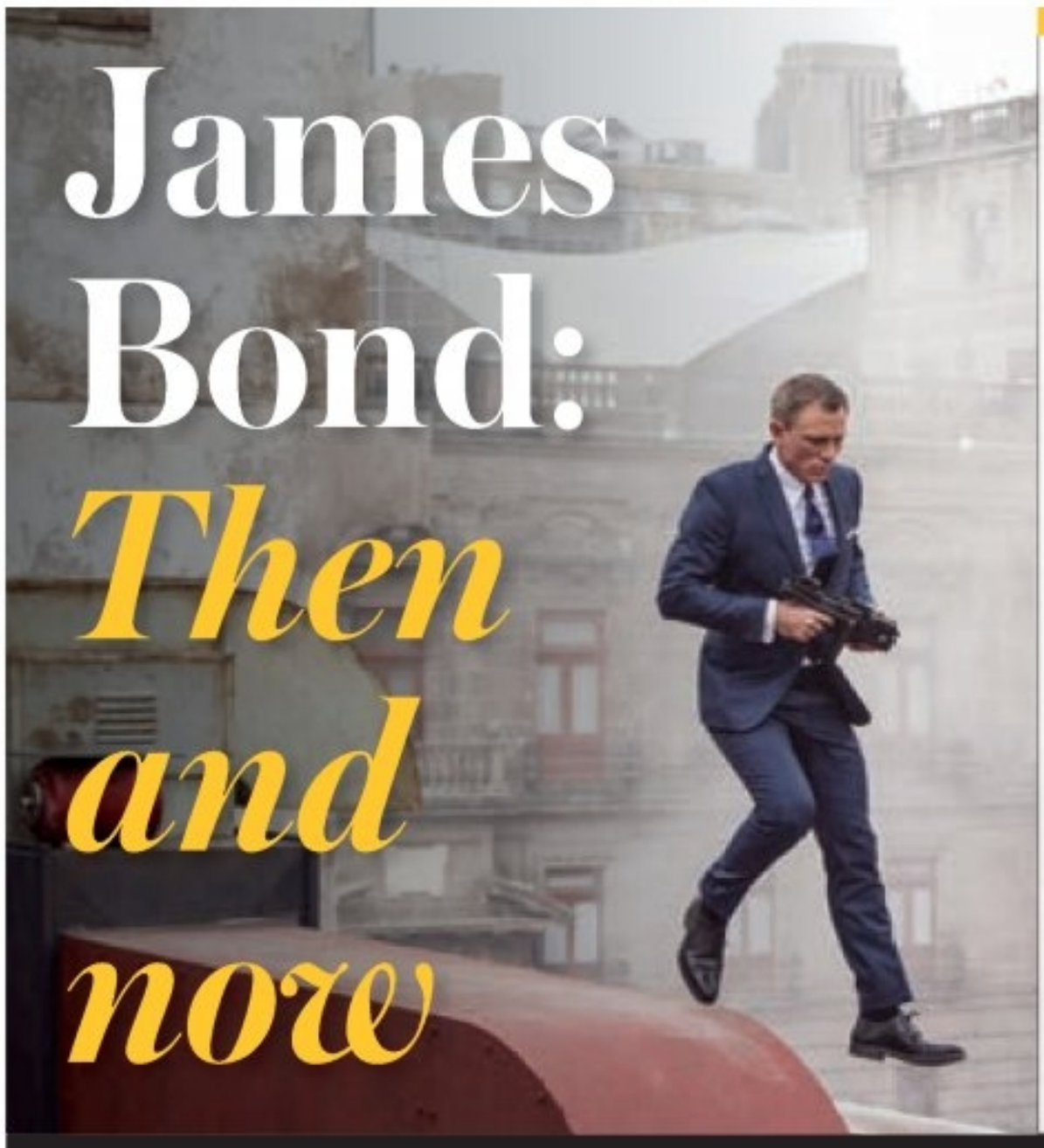
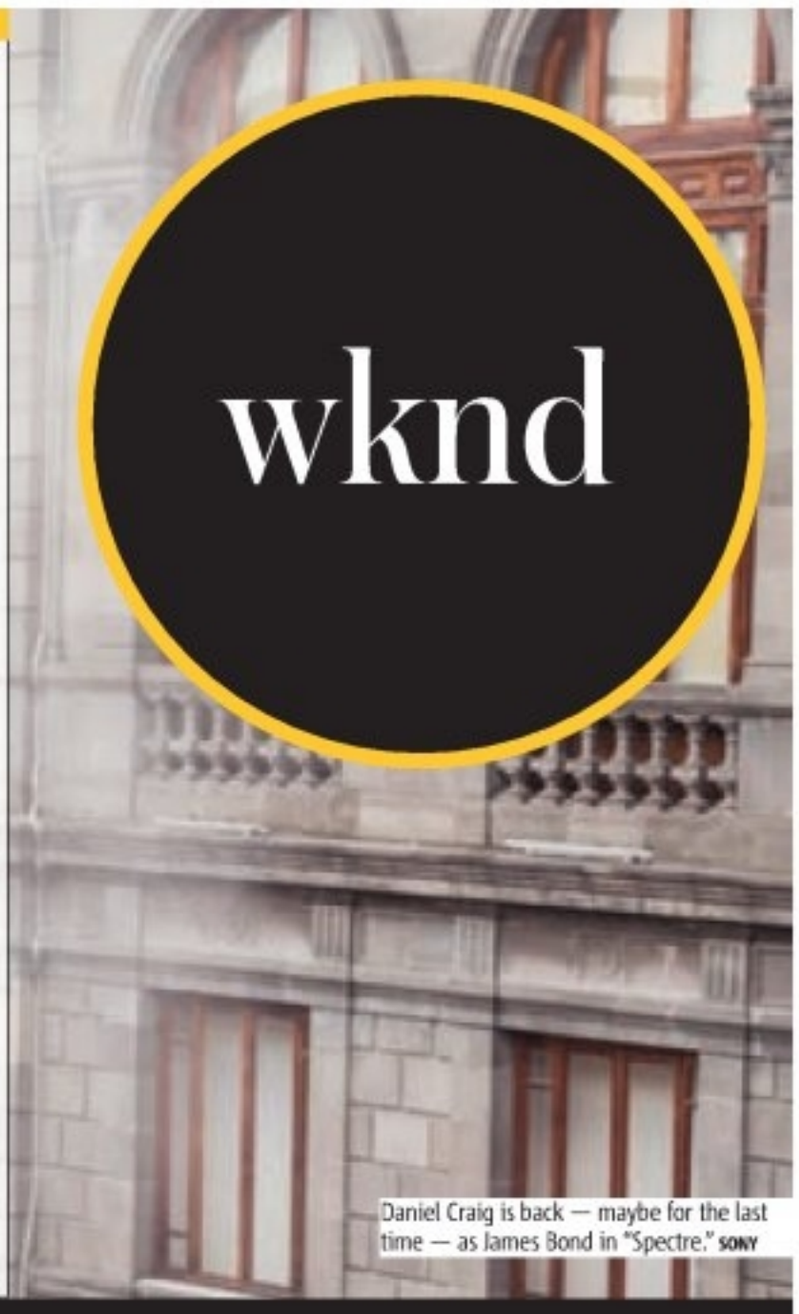
James Bond: *Then and now*



The best Bond film?

"On Her Majesty's Secret Service" was once the biggest outlier in the Bond franchise. It's the first one without Sean Connery (before he returned for one more, "Diamonds Are Forever"). It's the one with the not-very-liked George Lazenby. It's the first one that was really violent. It's the one with the dark, dark, dark ending.

Over the decades, it's become the one the cool kids prefer, in part for the very reasons that make it stick out. Christopher Nolan is a fan. Steven Soderbergh called it "the only one worth watching repeatedly for reasons other than pure entertainment." But it's also a first-rate Bond movie, filled with all the tropes in addition to a deeper sense of tragedy. And Lazenby is quite good — too chipper at times but tough when he needs to be. He nails the final scene, with a depth of feeling no Bond, not even Craig, has had to show.



Daniel Craig is back — maybe for the last time — as James Bond in "Spectre." SONY

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THE FUN STARTS HERE

The Bond films have survived over the last 53 years because they've been willing to change, swapping actors and embracing cultural trends. But they've also grown up in more profound ways over the half-century. Here's a look at some of the Bond tropes that have gotten makeovers, big and small, over the years.

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Sexism

Then: Ian Fleming's first Bond novel, "Casino Royale," was published in 1953, the same year as the first issue of Playboy. Its hungry subscribers were the perfect consumers of Fleming's violent escapist fare, filled with jet-setting, cocktails and disposable babes. It wasn't entirely unaware of its carousing worldview: The one time Bond settles down, in "On Her Majesty's Secret Service," his new bride is gunned down, as though leaving him to an eternity of quickie flings.

Ursula Andress

Now: Bond still doesn't settle down, and those he actually loves (Eva Green's Vesper Lynd from "Casino Royale") still die. But its view of female characters has gotten… slightly better. Once, a feisty Bond Girl like Diana Rigg in "On Her Majesty's Secret Service" was an outlier. Now they're fairly normal. There's even a push to call them "Bond Women." Still, even a strong-willed co-star like Lea Seydoux in "Spectre" is often reduced to a mere damsel in distress. Then again, better occasionally autonomous than "The World Is Not Enough"'s Dr. Christmas Jones.

Racism

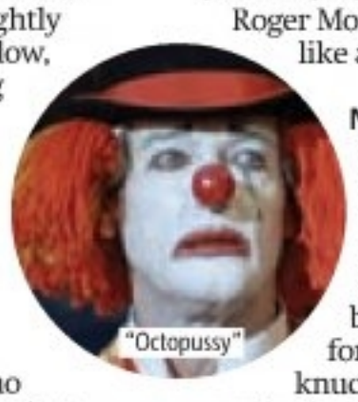
Then: Being the creation of a proper, professional alkie Englishman during the waning days of the British Empire, Fleming's original Bond books — and most of the films — weren't so delicate with other cultures and peoples. Sean Connery spends a long stretch of "You Only Live Twice" posing, badly, as a Japanese man. The "Live and Let Die" novel is jaw-droppingly casually 1950s English racist, regularly dropping the N-word and featuring a character bemoaning how nice Harlem was until, well, you know. The 1973 movie only slightly softened the blow, still portraying every black character as villainous.

"Live and Let Die"

Now: In 2015, we're talking about a possible black Bond who might even wind up being Idris Elba — and by "we're talking," we mean the Internet, not any of the actual film producers, since Elba has never been courted for the role, except by excitable journalists. What's worse, there's been an inevitable backlash from traditionalists uneasy about a nonwhite 007. Even Anthony Horowitz — current author of the series' books — let slip that he found Elba "too street," before apologizing.

Tone

Then: The tone of the series has wobbled over the decades. They started off, with "Dr. No," as more modest thrillers. With "Thunderball," they became sillier and more outsized. Since then, they've been campy (half of the Roger Moores), tough (the Timothy Daltons) and all over the place (the Pierce Brosnans). There's rarely a balance or consistent tone, as it's tough taking seriously a scene like the one in "Octopussy" where Roger Moore dresses like a clown.



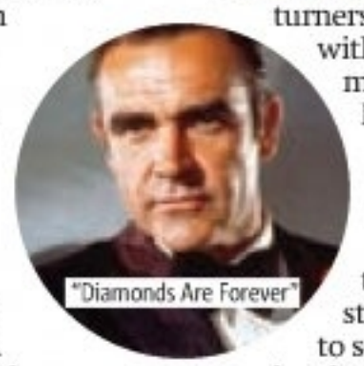
"Octopussy"

Now: By the Daniel Craig era, they had settled into serious, semi-realistic broodfests, fond of bare-knuckle violence and allergic to Moore-esque quips about his John Thomas. It's again all in keeping with the times: Genre junk, like comic books and Bond movies, is now treated like Ibsen. When people get tired of those — and when Craig passes the torch — the series could become quite different. Again.

"The Living Daylights"

International relations

Then: The Fleming novels and most of the films have treated the planet like a sprawling imperialist playground, envisioning a world where the West — and in particular an Englishman — can traipse about from scenic place to scenic place, and sometimes blow up parts of it real good. The series was born at the height of the Cold War, with Russia usually either an archnemesis or a dodgy ally against bigger baddies, sometimes including agents from dastardly SPECTRE.



"Diamonds Are Forever"

Now: As the Cold War ended, the series had to ditch Russia as a frenemy, and it has mostly stayed away from directly citing real-life tragedies. But the planet is still Bond's playground, and even in "Spectre," he destroys a small chunk of Mexico City in order to save it. Still, that's not as bad as that time in "The Living Daylights" when Dalton's Bond, as John Rambo did in "Rambo III," wound up aiding the Mujahideen, thus making the world safer for Al Qaeda. Whoops!

Stupidity

Then: Born of page-turners best enjoyed with a shaken martini, the Bond films have always been lax about logic. Even trying to follow a story can lead to scratched heads, and plots are often no more than excuses to get its hero from one pretty locale and splashy action set piece to another. In other words, they're all pretty stupid.

Now: Well, they're still pretty stupid. The Craig-era Bonds are filmed with confidence that they certainly look intelligent. But study them closer, and they're still the same jumble of dopey plots. The Craigs are anchored by a depth of feeling, which is less present in "Spectre," making it easier to notice that it's an incoherent storyline filled with cool stuff. Then again, people these days like their blockbusters to be a mere jumble of pure stuff. Once more, they're just keeping up with the times.

Toni Collette: It would be superfun to play a superhero

On "Miss You Already," the Oscar nominee found herself having fun making a movie about death.

MATT PRIGGE
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Drew Barrymore and Toni Collette play besties trying to cope when the latter's character is diagnosed with cancer in "Miss You Already." ROADSIDE ATTRACTIONS

Toni Collette is no stranger to one of the rarest kinds of movies: films about female friendships. "Muriel's Wedding" is about two friends, one (Rachel Griffiths) who is diagnosed with cancer. The same thing happens in "Miss You Already," with Collette as the one who turns ill. She's Milly, an extrovert whose struggle with disease brings her even closer to her longtime bestie, Jess (Drew Barrymore). It sounds like it would be a bummer to make, but Collette says it was a blast — at least up to a point.

How much time did you get with Drew Barrymore to establish that long, deep connection?
Not much, actually. We had five rehearsal days. Prior to that, we'd written to each other. We both loved the script; we both admired each other. So we just went for it. And luckily we just loved each other. We got on like a house on fire. The more time we hung out, the better we got. That just infused the film with something very real because you can't always fake chemistry. But we got lucky.

Films about female friendship seem to be rare, though you've done your fair share.
I've been pretty lucky. "Muriel's Wedding" was the second film I ever did, and that's what that film is about. And in "In Her Shoes" and "The United States of Tara," we're sisters but friends as well. So it hasn't been that rare. Although when this film came along, it felt like it had been a while. It felt rare in 2014.

This is dealing with a grim subject, but it seems like it was fun to make.
That's part of the spirit of the piece, which is very life-affirming and more celebratory than sad. It was also because of the budget. There was no chance of anyone running off and finding their solitude. We were all hunkered down on set. That gave it a personal, intimate feeling. When you're hanging out with people for 15 hours a day, a lot of humor comes out of that. You get to know people in a different way. It's not like working in an office, where you might have a little conversation every day. It's hours on end.

GETTY IMAGES

On death and dying

You're also dealing with mortality. Did you wind up reading a lot of Elisabeth Kubler-Ross and about the five stages of death?
I don't need to. I'm a Scorpio. I think about it a lot. [Laughs] It was very cathartic for me. I have two friends who have died from cancer, and I've had friends who have fought it, and they're still alive. I didn't want to get it wrong. It's both frightening and liberating when you find out you don't have as much time as you'd thought you did to live your life. We come from something, and we exit to the same place, and it always seems more infinite than this small, temporary window and this small, temporary body.

You haven't done many big movies, where everyone's more segregated. You haven't done any superhero movies.
I think it'd be superfun to be a superhero. I'm not averse to any particular budget. I'm just averse to a s—ty story. [Laughs] I don't care about the budget; it's about the quality.

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Shu Qi waits to gouge someone with a blade in Hou Hsiao-Hsien's art-wuxia film "The Assassin." AMPLIFY

'The Assassin'

Director: Hou Hsiao-Hsien
Stars: Shu Qi, Chang Chen
Rating: NR

●●●●●

Hou Hsiao-Hsien's art-house martial arts film has two speeds: blink-and-miss and not moving much at all. It lulls us then shocks us with sudden and brief violence, then lulls us right back again. Technically it delivers the goods: It follows a trained killer, played by Hou regular Shu Qi, on a mission to take out a feared governor (Chang Chen) and many others besides. But when Qi's Nie Yinniang delivers the blows, the tussles are over as quickly as they started. Most of the time, Yinniang lies in wait, or not even that. The show-stopper isn't some smackdown; it's a five-minute shot filmed through a black veil. There's some courtly business happening on the other side, but our attention is stolen by the way candlelight reflects on the fabric and the way the camera moves slowly and purposefully around a tiny space.

That's par for the course in "The Assassin," which is very much a film by Hou Hsiao-Hsien, the Taiwanese minimalist (last seen in 2008 with the Juliette Binoche-starring "The Flight of the Red Balloon") who prefers shots that often stare at action from a distance, suggesting stories more than telling them.

So little happens in "The Assassin," yet, at least in retrospect, it has a lot of plot — a story that makes it sound like a typical ass-kicker. There's a disarming push-pull between a high-toned art film that bewitches adventurous viewers with its long, quiet stretches of not much at all and a story that gets the job done. We might even be tempted to write it off, to say that Hou hasn't exactly sold out but has delivered more plot than at least six of his usual films. But it's worth engaging with, even if over multiple viewings. Just one viewing, though, should be good enough, even if all you do is sit back in your chair and stare in awe. MP

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AS IAN FLEMING'S JAMES BOND 007 IN
SPECTRE
007
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CHRISTOPH WALTZ LÉA SEYDOUX BEN WHISHAW NAOMIE HARRIS DAVE BAUTISTA WITH MONICA BELLUCCI AND RALPH FIENNES AS "M"
DANIEL CRAIG ANDREW NOAKES DAVID POPE THOMAS NEWMAN CALLUM McDOUGALL JOHN LOGAN AND NEAL PURVIS & ROBERT WADE
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'Miss You Already' takes a very English approach to dying

Drew Barrymore and Toni Collette try to stay close even as the latter succumbs to cancer in "Miss You Already." ROADSIDE ATTRACTIONS

'Miss You Already'

Director: Catherine Hardwicke
Stars: Toni Collette, Drew Barrymore
Rating: R

●●●●●

MATT PRIGGE
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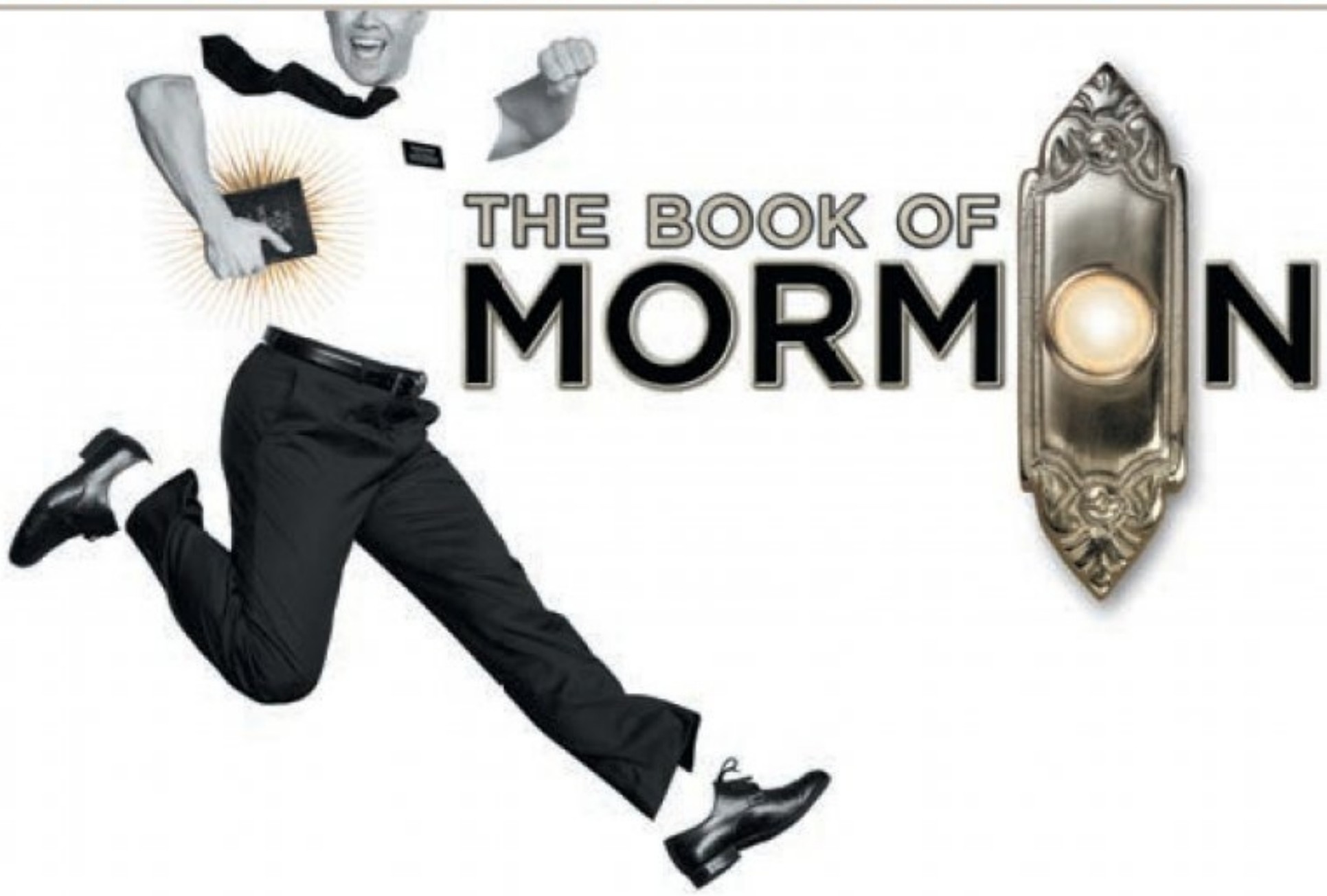
In the last year, it's been gutting watching a rarely livelier Julianne Moore pass on, mentally in the Alzheimer's drama "Still Alice" and physically in the otherwise dodgy "Freeheld." "Miss You Already" has a similar painful hook: You get to behold as Toni Collette, at her most spirited, slowly succumbs to cancer. On the plus side, at least it's British. The film is very English about looming death, meaning every grim development is caked in gallows humor — jokes deployed not to ignore tragedy but to defy it.

"Miss You Already" has another way of softening the blow. It's also a portrait of long-time female friendship. Collette's Milly has Jess (Drew Barrymore), her American bestie since childhood. They actually don't get a ton of shared screen time, but that makes sense: This is a funny-tough film about not just cancer but the messy segue into adulthood and responsibility, when home life and kids (or in Jess' case, pregnancy) rob you of face-time with friends and anything else you once might have enjoyed.

The screenplay teems with lived-in details and refreshing insights, especially amongst the disease movie genre. Among the best is Milly's worrying over no longer being considered an attractive physical specimen, especially after she undergoes a mastectomy. The film is right along with her. It's understandable that it occasionally turns stock. Milly and Jess suffer through the requisite end-of-second-act falling out, though at least it's over a real complaint. It has the power of its convictions, and it also has Toni Collette.

PHILADELPHIA, WE MISSED YOU TOO!



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‘Spectre’ is a return to when the Bond films were brainless junk

MATT PRIGGE
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matt.prigge@metro.us

Daniel Craig’s James Bond is once again on a mission to find out more about his past in “Spectre.” SONY

The thing about the Bond movies is that most of them are just fine — spotty, often noticeably stupid bursts of incidental pleasures coasting on a film franchise that’s now 53 years young. That’s where “Spectre” falls. We’ve been trained by the Daniel Craig era to expect extremes. They’ll either be one of the very best (“Casino Royale,” “Skyfall”) or one of the very worst (“Quantum of Solace”). “Spectre” may look and act like it’s another Craig brooder, told with funereal heaviness by Oscar-winning director Sam Mendes and featuring a minimum of quippage by its pissed-off star. But at its heart, it’s another dopey Roger Moore outing, minus the jokes about his ween.

It wants to be more. Once again, 007 is on a rogue mission for himself, eventually stumbling upon Spectre, the shadowy criminal organization from the Connery era, which is run by a creepy dude (Christoph Waltz) who may or may not be a rebooted version of old Bond nemesis Blofeld. Playing coy about his identity — taking a page from the worst part of “Star Trek Into Darkness” — is “Spectre” at its most misjudged. But the rest is a mashup of the classic and the new, sometimes incoherently. The Bond girl, Lea Seydoux’s Dr. Madeleine Swann, is a feisty loner one minute then a damsel in distress the next. Mendes’ direction is meticulous, but the pageantry just makes it easier to notice how dumb and incoherent the story gets.

Heavy as it is, “Spectre” still winds up fine junk cinema — pricey, lovingly orchestrated mayhem amid a globe-trotting story you can half follow, if you want to at all. There’s a slowly escalating Day of the Dead opener, a smackdown with Dave Bautista and a funny/harrowing torture bit that plays like the rat-cage-mask from “1984” but with needles. “Spectre” will be a fine way to kill a Thanksgiving Day, when TNT crams it between “Octopussy” and “You Only Live Twice.”

Charlie Brown embarks on one of many failed attempts to woo the Little Red-Haired Girl in “The Peanuts Movie.” TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX

‘The Peanuts Movie’

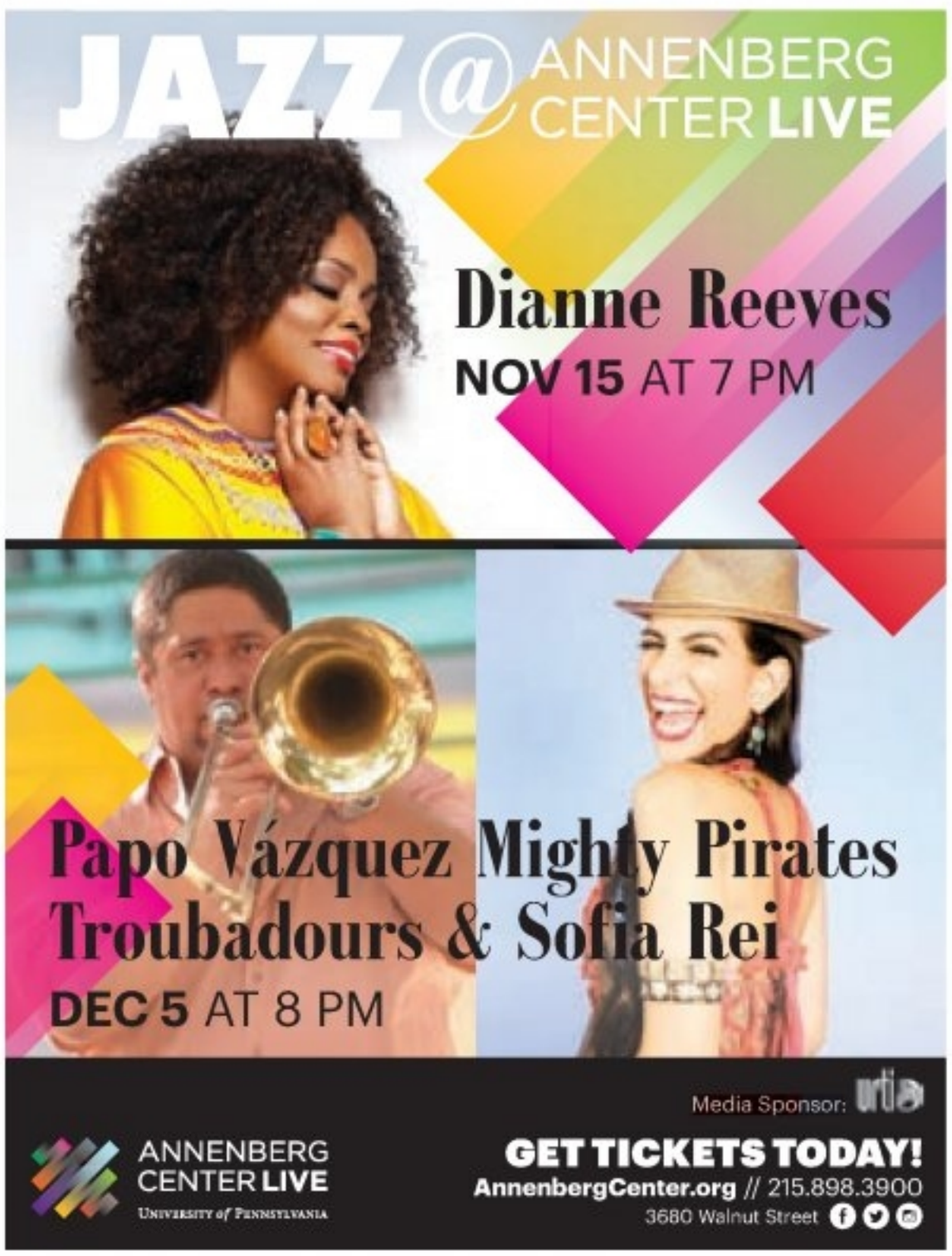
Director: Steve Martino
Voices of: Noah Schnapp, Bill Melendez
Rating: G

• • • • •

A movie of Charles Schulz’s “Peanuts” could go the lowest common denominator cash-cow route and be another “Smurfs” or an “Alvin and the Chipmunks.” It could also go the other way: be a slavish re-creation of the storied TV specials that started running in the 1960s. Improbably, “The Peanuts Movie” goes full-on for the latter. Digital makeover and all, it seeks to play exactly like several old, only slightly refurbished TV specials stitched together.

It pretty much, minus some quibbles, gets there too. The film is basically plotless, drifting from episode to episode, most of them related to baldie depresso Charlie Brown and his shy pursuit of the fabled Little Red-Haired Girl. What follows is not a very 2015 movie.

“Peanuts” can be too meandering and shapeless, but there is enough shape there, mostly tied to Charlie Brown’s hill-and-dale moods and realizing his powerful mediocrity. The modest tragedy of Charlie Brown, after all, is that he’s not special — or, as he poetically puts it, he’s “an insecure, wishy-washy failure.” The movie could stew a little more in his sadness, be a little loopier, maybe dream up some sillier misadventures for the other characters. Then again, you get the sense of a rich microcosm that’s only beginning to be explored again — though you don’t have to be too cynical to suspect the sequels won’t be this bold. MP



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Preparing for spontaneity

Chris Forsyth and Jesse Kudler make the historic Christ Church part of the music.

SHAUN BRADY
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letters@metro.us

Intensive rehearsal periods aren't exactly typical for improvised music performances; in fact, the two ideas seem downright antithetical. But that changes a bit when the very room where you'll be performing is also one of your primary instruments.

For the past two months, musicians-composers Chris Forsyth and Jesse Kudler have spent several hours each week exploring the sonic properties of historic Christ Church. The results of those experiments will be revealed Saturday at "Sounding Christ Church," funded by a grant from the American Composers Forum's Philadelphia Chapter, when the duo will perform a loosely structured improvisation taking advantage of the spacious church's unique acoustics.

"We've had a chance to really sink into the space," Forsyth says. "We found the most active resonant frequencies of the building and we're trying to focus on those. It's just beautiful-sounding instruments in a beautiful space, so you don't have to do too much."

The duo worked together once before in Christ Church, but with little time to test the acoustics beforehand found that they'd barely scratched the surface of its possibilities. Unexpectedly, having more time has led to a paring back of instrumentation and activity. Forsyth, who can be found most often leading his much noisier avant-psych Solar Motel Band, will stick to acoustic guitar; Kudler, a minimalist sound artist who usually works with electronics, synthesizer and prepared guitar, will play the church's pipe organ.

Forsyth compares the experience to "playing a guitar inside a giant guitar," and jokes that his collaborator's increasing facility on the organ could lead to a definite novelty: "We could bill it as 'Kudler plays melodies,'" he laughs. "We were both surprised by how much we stripped back," Kudler adds. "To me it feels less sprawling but deeper."

Besides playing atypical instruments in an unusual space, the two improvisers are also approaching this performance as composers, albeit ones who are compiling a sketchbook of sounds and approaches rather than putting notes on paper. "We haven't been sitting in a room for 14 weeks writing down something out of our heads, we've been mapping the sonics of this room and trying to figure out what our relationship is with it," Forsyth says. "We'll be doing a lot of swimming in the sound of it."

Jesse Kudler and Chris Forsyth PROVIDED

Site-specific vibes

Another appeal of the room is its history. Frequented by the Founding Fathers, Christ Church stakes its claim as the site of one the first acts of treason in the American Revolution, when its pastor ripped the king's name out of the Book of Common Prayer.

"There's a good kind of badassness inherent in the place," Forsyth concludes. "It's got a good vibe."

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In accordance with the Self Storage Lien Law of Pennsylvania 73 P.S. 1901-1917 and to satisfy an operator's lien, the personal property contained in the following units will be sold at public auction to the highest bidder for cash on **Wednesday November 18, 2015 at 12:01 p.m.** at Self Service Storage 2000 Hamilton St., Philadelphia, PA. 19130, (215)569-0732.
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A742 - Clarke, Theodore • A746 - Ramos, Jessica • A771 - Granger, Shayna • A800 - Hill, Stephen
B1111 - Waller, Tanya • B1124 - Reyes, Jasette • B1506 - Reis, Deryk • B1715 - Bowen, William
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Chicken and dumplings with carrots and fresh thyme

Recipe

MARLEY SPOON

We've been waiting for cooler nights for this truly comforting classic: chicken and dumplings. Cook, relax and enjoy!

Cooking time: 40 minutes
Attributes: poultry
Calories: 715 kcal/person
Allergens: gluten, milk

What we send
- 3 carrots (3.5 oz total)
- 1 onion (6 oz)
- 2 celery (3 oz total)
- 2 cloves garlic (0.4 oz total)
- 12 oz boneless, skinless chicken thighs
- fresh thyme sprigs (0.15 oz)
- 8 oz chicken broth
- 1 1/2 tsp baking powder (0.25 oz)
- 6.75 oz milk
- 1 cup frozen peas (5 oz)

What you need
- freshly ground black pepper
- coarse salt
- olive oil
- all-purpose flour

Equipment
- pot

Directions:

1 Prep ingredients
Peel and chop carrot, celery, onion and garlic. Cut chicken into 1-inch pieces.

2 Brown chicken
Season chicken with pepper and salt. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in a pot. Add chicken in a single layer and cook until well browned. Stir chicken and cook for 2 minutes.

3 Cook vegetables
Add onion, carrot, celery, garlic and half the thyme sprigs to pot and season with pepper and salt. Cook for 3 minutes.

4 Simmer
Return chicken to pot and add chicken broth and 1/2 cup water. Bring to a boil then reduce to a simmer. Simmer partially covered for 20 minutes.

5 Make dumplings
Remove leaves from remaining thyme sprigs and chop. Whisk together 1/2 cup flour, baking powder and 1/2 teaspoon salt. Slowly whisk in 1/2 cup milk.

6 Add dumplings
Stir peas into pot, then drop dumpling batter by the spoonful on top. Sprinkle dumplings with thyme and few grinds of black pepper. Cover and simmer until dumplings are firm, about 10 minutes.

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C241 - Cooke, Malcolm • C382 - DOUGHERTY, RICHARD • D400 - Fiorilli, Marissa
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Aries Self-confidence will be a byproduct of knowledge. Research to become more familiar with your topic, and you will be able to sway others.

Taurus Action will lead to the assistance you require to advance. You will raise support for your plans if you can substantiate challenges.

Gemini Tension will invoke you to say things you'll regret. Think before you speak or you could do irreparable damage to a relationship.

Cancer Add comfort and convenience to your home and personal life. You can avoid opposition if you ask for input from those affected.

Leo A day at a spa will help keep your mind off your worries. Consider getting together with friends for some lighthearted entertainment.

Virgo You will be unhappy if you feel obliged to hide your true feelings. Honest communication is the first step toward solving your problems.

Libra Overextending your budget will result in added pressure. Travel is enjoyable, but not if you are putting your financial future in jeopardy.

Scorpio Surprise someone you care about. Whether it's a new relationship or one you've been in for years, being attentive will ward off problems.

Sagittarius Take care of tasks you've left unfinished before you take on a new challenge. Your innovative solutions will help to smooth relations.

Capricorn Stick to your agenda and be ready to say no to additional responsibilities. A good friend or family member will offer timely tips.

Aquarius Love is reaching new heights. Let your imagination inspire you to add some spice to your personal life.

Pisces Be receptive to new possibilities. Joining a cause will be the beginning of a new friendship and lead to influential contacts. EUGENIA LAST

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easy

	7		2	3		4		
5	9					7		
3				7			5	6
		5	6		4			
6				8				1
			5		1	2		
9	6			5				4
		1					7	8
		4		6	2		1	

hard

	9	6			5	7		
			9					5
				8	6	3	9	
9					3	8		6
	7						1	
8		5	4					7
	8	7	6	2				
5					1			
		4	8			1	2	

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WOOOOOOSH!
BLING CITY. TWO ROGUE RAPPERS, DJ DIABETES AND FAMINE THE STARVING ARTIST ARE ENGAGING IN AN UNREGISTERED RAP BATTLE!
YO! FEEL MY POWER!
CHOOM!
UNGHHH!

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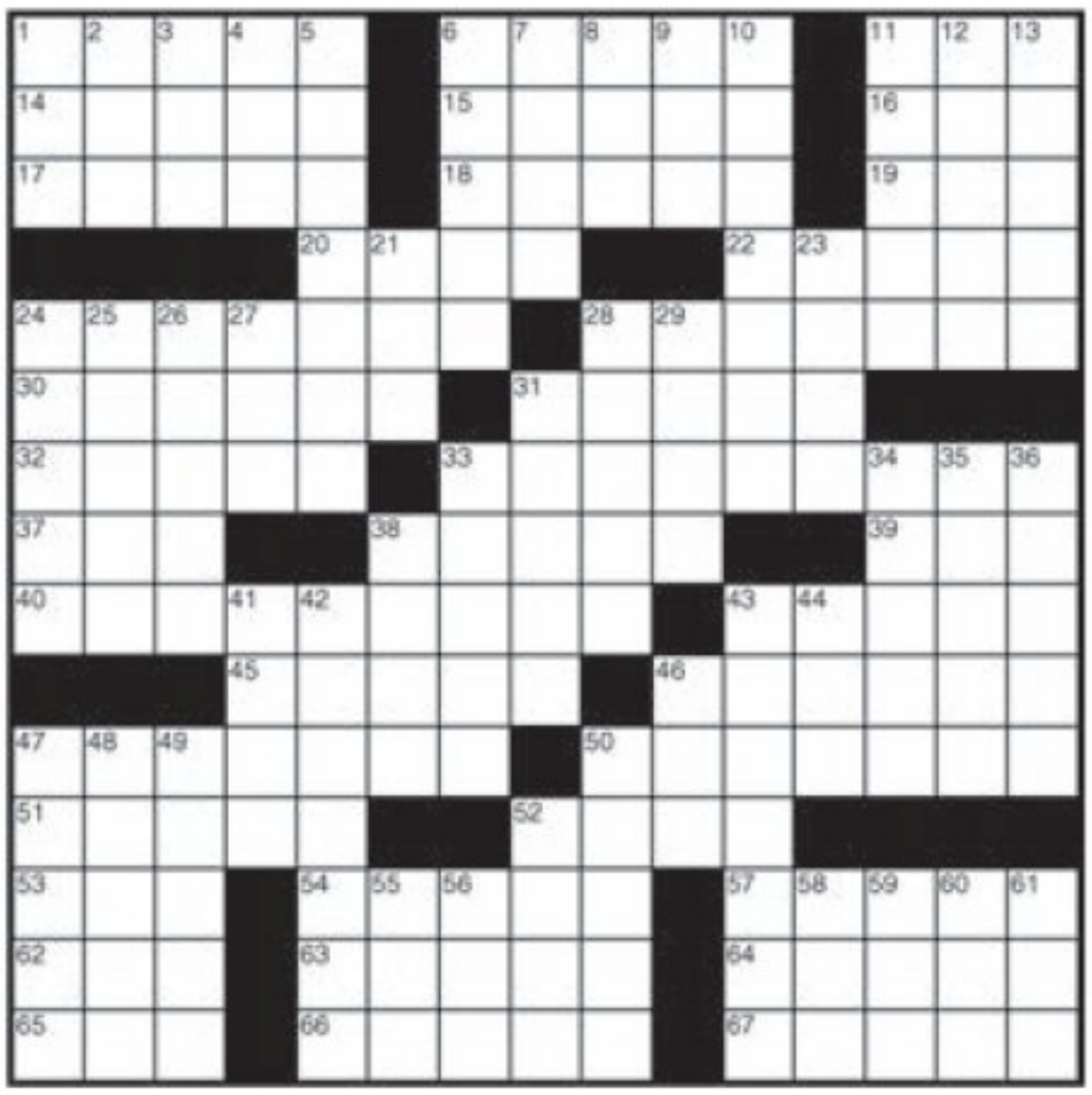

Across

1 Waited awhile
6 Join, as hands
11 Bench warmer
14 Port near Kyoto
15 Bookstore section (hyph.)
16 Wall Street deg.
17 Quaking —
18 Certain wolf
19 Charged particle
20 Lairs
22 Kind of bar
24 Dabbing on
28 Noisy
30 Habituated
31 Raw-fish delicacy
32 "Peanuts" kid
33 OK with everything
37 Left Bank pal
38 Welsh dog
39 Flightless bird
40 Some plants
43 Fragment
45 Revival shouts
46 Old-fashioned hat
47 Tries for a job
50 Wheat, rye, etc.
51 Having a good physique
52 — Almond of Soft Cell
53 Motel of yore
54 — wave or pool
57 Cagers' goals
62 Morse signal
63 The upper crust
64 Historical period
65 Kind of system
66 Ballerina painter
67 Third dimension

Down

1 Glamorous wrap
2 Soyuz destination
3 Drop bait on water
4 Make do with
5 Fops
6 Cheech's partner
7 Records
8 Hole puncher
9 Sault — Marie
10 Maserati rival
11 Encouraging look
12 "Das Boot" craft (hyph.)
13 Toss about, as words
21 Wind up
23 Similar
24 Saffron dish
25 Jung's inner self
26 Forum wear
27 Play about Capote
28 Ladder steps
29 — spumante
31 Blisters
33 Loose change
34 Frosh, usually
35 Quiz-show VIP
36 Recital offerings
38 Hudson Bay tribe
41 Lofty
42 Failed to include
43 Stole eggs?
44 Those elected
46 Chilly comment
47 Tolerate
48 Wars against Carthage
49 Bean or horse
50 Freighter hazards
52 — Hari
55 Land in "la mer"
56 Tunnel
58 Unlatch, to a bard
59 Dinny's rider
60 Interest amt.
61 Library caution

For answers, go to
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3 Things to watch for as the Eagles seek revenge in Dallas

The Eagles prepare for a huge primetime rematch with their NFC East rivals.

EVAN MACY
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The Eagles have the NFL's best record after a bye week, with 12 wins in their last 14 post-bye games. Under Chip Kelly, the Birds are 1-1, but this year the time off came at a good time as several key Eagles players have gotten healthy. Their third straight primetime game, this one is the most important by far. Philly can not only get back to the .500 mark at 4-4, but they can all-but silence the Cowboys in the NFC East as a loss will drop them to 2-6 on the year.

Rookie inside linebacker Jordan Hicks has stepped in and looked like a seasoned pro. GETTY IMAGES

1

Quadruple threat

The Eagles have been shifting inside linebackers in and out through their first seven games. Boasting perhaps the most talented unit in football, injuries to Kiko Alonso, DeMeco Ryans and Mychal Kendricks have caused each to miss some important time.

However, the trio's injury issues did open up the field for Jordan Hicks, the Eagles' third-round pick from Texas. And the linebacker has shown he deserves to be in the regular, healthy rotation. Hicks leads the Eagles in tackles and has created two key turnovers (for a defense that leads the NFL in takeaways).

"First, you got to get them back into the main role, get them oiled up to where they're very confident and play well at that spot before I can get too exotic with packages," Eagles defensive coordinator Bill Davis said.

2

Return to three-headed monster

The Eagles started the season dead last in rushing, but they've slowly rebounded.

Recent impressive outputs by Ryan Mathews and DeMarco Murray have had the Birds' offense looking a little more like itself lately.

But to win against Dallas, Philly will need to continue to utilize the run game to keep the ball, as much as possible, away from the Cowboys ground game — which has also returned to form. And even though Mathews has been the hot hand, the Eagles want to continue to spread the wealth (to include Darren Sproles too).

3

No helping Hardy

Cowboys defensive end Greg Hardy has averaged nearly two sacks per game over his last 13 starts. He also is responsible for the lone turnover for the Cowboys in recent weeks, with his big interception in Week 8 against the Seahawks. Keeping him in check will be a challenge for the Eagles makeshift offensive line.

"They have moved him around," Kelly told the media Thursday, "so you've got to be aware that he's not always going to line up across from your left tackle; he could be inside on the guards. He's been out at the other defensive end also. It's predominantly in one spot, but there is movement and you have to be aware of where he is."

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Derek Carr is, under the radar, becoming a reliable NFL quarterback in Oakland. GETTY IMAGES

Stick with red-hot Raiders, pick against Niners in Week 9

Also, who to take in the Adrian Peterson vs. Todd Gurley RB battle this weekend.

ROBERT CRISCOLA
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Oakland Raiders at Pittsburgh Steelers (-4.5)
Over the last few years, betting Oakland on the road was the equivalent of lighting your money on fire. But the Raiders have turned the corner this year, and are 3-0 ATS on the road so far. The Steelers will be without Le'Veon Bell for the rest of the season after he tore his MCL, so second-stringer DeAngelo Williams will have to combat Oakland's second-ranked rush defense. The Raiders have been porous when it comes to stopping the pass, but Pittsburgh is ranked only 21st in passing offense, so the Steelers will have some trouble putting points on the board. Oakland brings a more balanced offensive attack, ranked ninth in the league, with blossoming sophomore QB Derek Carr, RB Latavius Murray and WR Amari Cooper leading the way. The Raiders have a slight advantage on paper, but because of the volatile nature of NFL games, grab the points for insurance.
The pick: **Raiders +4.5**

The best of the rest

Our picks in the rest of this week's games **(picks are in bold)**:

- Miami Dolphins at **Buffalo Bills (-3)**
- **Jacksonville Jaguars** at New York Jets (-7)
- Washington Redskins at **New England Patriots (-14)**
- Tennessee Titans at **New Orleans Saints (-8)**
- **Green Bay Packers (-2.5)** at Carolina Panthers
- **New York Giants (-2.5)** at Tampa Bay Buccaneers
- **Denver Broncos (-3.5)** at Indianapolis Colts
- **Philadelphia Eagles (-2.5)** at Dallas Cowboys
- Chicago Bears at San Diego Chargers (-3.5)

St. Louis Rams at Minnesota Vikings (-2.5)
Points will be at a premium in this matchup as the Rams (sixth in defense, 30th in offense) pay a visit to the Vikings (seventh in defense, 29th in offense). Since temporarily relocating to the Minnesota Golden Gophers' stadium, the Vikings have gone 8-3 ATS in home games. St. Louis will offer the Vikings a heavy dose of Todd Gurley, the rookie RB who's rushed for over 100 yards in four straight games. But three of the four defenses he faced during that streak rank in the bottom third in rush defense. Minnesota ranks 15th in rush defense overall but is first in rush defense at home (just 61.7 YPG allowed in three home games). Meanwhile, Adrian Peterson has embarrassed the Rams' rush defense in the few times he's played them, including a 212-yard game back in 2012.
The pick: Vikings -2.5

Atlanta Falcons (-7) at San Francisco 49ers
This is a big spread to lay with a road team, but the Falcons have a huge advantage in this matchup. They have one of the best offenses in football (ranked fourth in YPG gained) and will meet little resistance in San Francisco (ranked 27th in YPG allowed). Matt Ryan should have no problem locating Julio Jones and Roddy White all game long. And if he gets bored, Devonta Freeman can shoulder the load against a shoddy 49ers rush defense. On the other side, TE Vernon Davis left for Denver in a trade, Blaine Gabbert takes over for Colin Kaepernick at QB in a desperation move and RB Carlos Hyde is a game-time decision against the NFL's No.1 rush defense. These are desperate times in San Francisco. Expect Atlanta to kick them while they're down.
The pick: **Falcons -7**

Week 9 filled with must-see matchups

Week 8 had its share of great matchups. Only against the elite Broncos defense could Packers Aaron Rodgers manage to put up only 77 passing yards and a single-digit FanDuel score. Also last week, Giants' Eli Manning and Saints Drew Brees put up 38+ FanDuel points ... each! In Week 9, there are a variety of matchups that could either positively or negatively affect your FanDuel lineup.

Cromartie vs. Father Time

This week, the Jets face the up-and-down Jaguars. It is more than likely that Darrelle Revis will defend WR Allen Robinson, leaving Antonio Cromartie to contain Allen Hurns. Cromartie is not the same cornerback he used to be, Hurns scored a touchdown in each of his last five games, and he will only cost you $6,800. This is a matchup a FanDuel player could use to prosper.

Langford vs. Chargers D

San Diego gives up the absolute most FanDuel points to opposing running backs. In fact, they give up an average of 116 yards on the ground and another 56 yards receiving to whatever back faces them. This week, that back will be unproven rookie Jeremy Langford.

Manning vs. Colts

The Peyton Manning we saw play against the Packers in Week 8 is the kind of Manning that's confident in his defense. With an entirely new way of winning, there is a chance that Manning will have his wits about him and have a decent game. It doesn't hurt that the Indianapolis defense is nothing to write home about.

Rodgers vs. Norman

Aaron Rodgers is going to have to figure out how to both avoid Norman and ignite his anemic offense. Even if you take his 77-yard passing performance against the Broncos off the table, Rodgers hasn't been the same guy this season, having only gone over 300 passing yards once all year.

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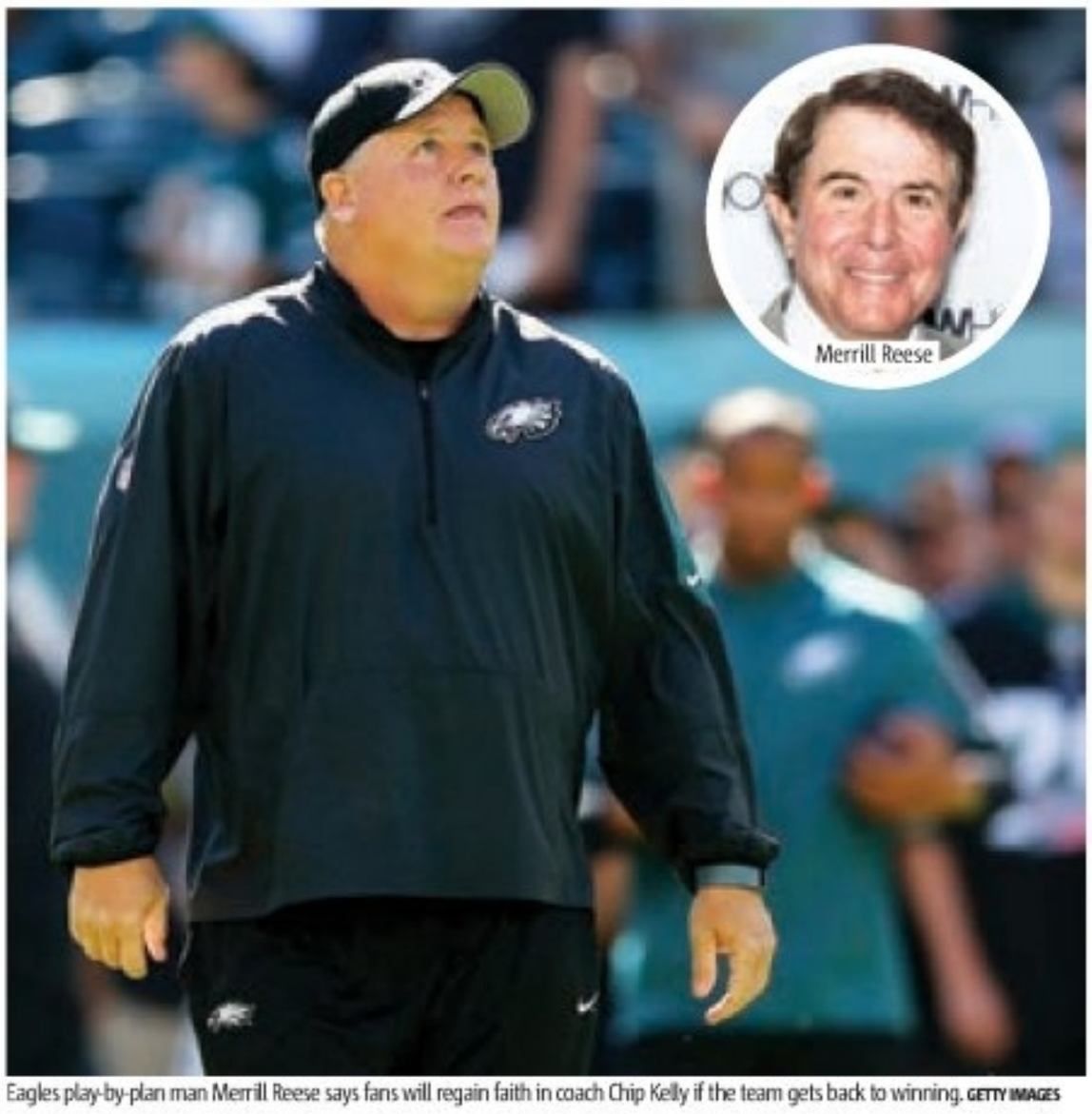

Eagles play-by-plan man Merrill Reese says fans will regain faith in coach Chip Kelly if the team gets back to winning. GETTY IMAGES

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Eagles legend Reese

Eagles legendary announcer Merrill Reese talks Chip Kelly, Temple, Bill Cosby and more.

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"They wear their hearts on their sleeves and the fact they care so much about their team makes this the most satisfying job in the world."

Reese on Eagles fans

How unexpected has been the way this Eagles season has played out?
I've never seen a season like it. Everyone thought this team would be the class of the NFC and right now they're struggling. The preseason, no matter how you look at it, only gives you a glimpse of what players can do.

Have you ever seen a season like this in the NFC East?
Other years they've been grouped together like this. It shows there's no world-beaters. I remember when the Giants and Cowboys met for the Division title in 2012 and the Giants went on after that to win the Super Bowl. So I would never rule out anything.

So what about the Eagles?
I think the next four weeks are critical for the Eagles. If they play well and can win four they can be a factor. I could see them running off four wins and suddenly they're 7-4 and be right back in the thick of things. It won't be easy, but it's obviously doable. But I'm not looking past anyone.

What's Chip Kelly really like?
Chip is all football and everything about Chip is quick. He's got a quick wit, a quick mind, a quick offense. But he's a very, very bright man whom I think has a wider range of knowledge than people are led to believe.

Do you expect the fans to stay behind Chip?
I think when you're a head coach in the NFL your fan appreciation rating always depends on your last performance. These are very passionate fans, who were thinking at the start of the season this team might go to the Super Bowl. They're frustrated. When the team goes on a bad stretch like it has that's how fans react. If they win three or four in a row they'll be back in Chip's corner.

As a Temple grad, what's it meant for you to see them have this kind of season?
Seeing Temple nationally ranked, it's beyond my wildest dream. I was there when Bill Cosby was playing (1962). … He was the fullback on the team. We did a show together on the campus station, WRTI. We called it the "Bill Cosby Show." I used to interview him and he'd be funny.

What's something people probably don't know about you?
My mother would take me for drama lessons and I did lot of TV commercials as a kid. I did Lummis peanut butter, Ranger Joe cereal and I used to be on with Chuckwagon Pete doing Sylvan Seal milk. Many of the commercials were live at the time. There was no video tape. But I couldn't wait to get home so I could throw on my old clothes and play ball.

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11/10/2015 at 9:30 AM
1840 Torresdale Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19124

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